Future-proof your workforce: refining processes through elearning

By Jared Orlin

leolearning.com
This LEO ebook sheds light on the key areas where business processes intersect with key business drivers, and demonstrates why learning programmes around both are essential to future-proofing an organisation.
Organisations make thousands of operational decisions every week – from those that are far-reaching and complicated, to the smaller and more self-contained.

The processes that a company has around these decisions can have a huge impact on the organisation, customers and profits. In order to become – and remain – successful and competitive, businesses must continuously manage their processes. Failure to do so could lead to higher costs, lower revenues, less motivated employees and a reduction in market share... not a situation that any organisation wants to find itself in!
The global workplace is more complex than it’s ever been.

To put that into context, the Boston Consulting Group surveyed more than 100 American and European listed companies to understand the recent rapid growth of organisational processes. “The survey results show that over the past 15 years, the amount of procedures, vertical layers, interface structures, coordination bodies, and decision approvals needed in each of those firms has increased by anywhere from 50% to 350.”

The rate of adoption of new processes that companies must deal with daily isn’t slowing down. If anything, the wider business landscape is becoming more complicated, leading to an urgent need for CEOs to think about the future. Another recent study surveyed over 1,000 business leaders to get a sense of how future-proof these organisations think they are. The study found that “90% of these companies believe their core business is threatened by new digital competitors that are challenging their products and services. Second, 70% believe that they do not have the right leadership, skills, or operating models to adopt.”

To keep up with the rapidly changing workplace requires strategic training interventions and learning programmes to continuously impart knowledge to the workforce. Learning programmes centred on essential business processes are vital for ensuring compliance, consistency, safety and quality, as well as improving outcomes for businesses. Or as researcher John Bersin recommends, we need to create an environment of “always-on learning, and a culture of exploration and discussion to enable continuous invention.”

What are business processes?

A business process, also known as a business method, is a “collection of related, structured activities or tasks that produce a specific service or product (serve a particular goal) for a particular customer or customers.” Business processes can either be manual (achieved without technology) or automated (where technology assists users in implementing the process in a more accurate, standardised or optimised manner).
Client success stories

1: Making the move to digital

A health and beauty retailer wanted to take their in-house training digital, and commissioned LEO to convert their paper-based induction and product knowledge training materials into an engaging elearning solution for their staff in over 800 stores.

LEO created 17 microlearning modules on various induction topics including customer service and till operations, as well as product training modules covering haircare, skincare and fragrance.

2: Code of conduct, conflicts of interest and competition law

A global energy supplier commissioned LEO to create a series of elearning modules with topics such as Conflicts of Interest, Competition Law and Code of Conduct. A key reason for the training was the need to impart how the organisation’s code of conduct affects everyday practices across the business.

To achieve this, we based the learning around a series of ‘interactive dilemmas’ where learners were introduced to specific scenarios. To test learners’ knowledge, we developed a series of questions where learners could rate their confidence in each situation and be able to revise their choices in light of further information.

These were designed to challenge learners to display their understanding of the Code, their responsibilities and where they could seek advice. Learners were supported in this by a series of short tutorials and resources.
An increasingly competitive landscape

The April 2017 United Airlines PR debacle, where an unwilling passenger was forcibly removed from a plane and fellow passenger videos of the incident went viral on social media, is a good example of the importance of process training. In an attempt to undo the damage, United CEO Oscar Munoz claimed that the airline had “followed established procedures” when aviation authorities removed the passenger from the flight, which they said had been overbooked. If United’s processes had been clear and had been managed appropriately, from the handling of the customer to communications in the incident’s aftermath, the impact would not have been as severe. Instead, what resulted is the kind of PR disaster and brand erosion that has the potential to do long-lasting damage.

A company’s brand is more important than ever, and training around processes that establish and reinforce the brand must be deployed—rapidly, cost-effectively and at scale—to ensure that learners can ‘speak’ the language of the business.
A large European airline needed to completely redesign their health and safety curriculum for their global workforce to ensure compliance with legal standards and airline policy. They also sought to reduce learner downtime and duplication of content by bringing together three existing competencies and facilitating a new matrixed approach to learning. To maximise learner relevance, LEO created a complex role filter with over 40 different possible pathways. Learner engagement was ensured by using a rich mix of media, including storytelling and masterclass videos starring actual airline staff, animated infographics and video ‘photo stories’ (photo montages timed to audio in order to dramatise a story). A ‘spot the risk’ quiz provided additional interactivity and ensured application of learning. LEO estimates that the course has enabled well over £800,000 of staff downtime to be saved by tailoring the course to individuals’ needs.

leolearning.com

@leolearning
Organisations today operate in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous business landscape, otherwise known as a VUCA environment.

Many business sectors are facing massive disruption and increased competition. The FMCG, Retail, Automotive, Airline, Pharma and Life Sciences industries in particular are under pressure to achieve growth at home and in emerging markets, all while fending off increasing competition.

Several of the largest sectors that LEO advises are facing evolutionary change on multiple fronts, such as globalisation, increased exposure via social media and decreasing margins with increased competition. All of these factors can be mitigated and leveraged through a company’s processes but that means needs-based, tailored training to ensure that a company’s workforce receives the appropriate knowledge to do their jobs properly.
Rapid upskilling for sales staff

LEO worked with a luxury FMCG retailer to create product knowledge training materials at very short notice to upskill sales associates on newly introduced product ranges. The client products are seasonal, which means the elearning content needs to be refreshed on a regular basis, so rapid development was essential.

LEO’s solution, developed using the gomo authoring tool, aims to educate sales staff with an innovative and engaging approach which would increase their ability to sell for key periods like Valentine’s Day.

Sustainability training

One clothing retailer was keen to educate staff on making more sustainable fashion choices available, affordable and attractive to as many people as possible. They appointed LEO to create two sustainability courses that utilised interactive screens, animations and video:

- a beginner’s course that opens with a short animation and is then broken down into seven easily-digestible, bite-sized modules with an emphasis on the company’s commitment to sustainability.

- a follow-up course of 11 short modules which delves deeper into the challenges within sustainability and the actions the company takes towards sustainability.
Business disruption: facing change in uncertain times

Technology is changing the way businesses optimise their processes. “Today, in the world of rapidly changing markets, and digital products and services, the traditional concept of ‘scale’ and ‘efficiency’ no longer applies,” adds trends researcher John Bersin. “Thanks to the cloud and the Internet, barriers to entry have been lowered. You cannot ‘keep your market’ just because you are big or efficient – someone else will likely reinvent it before your eyes, and then his/her company may disrupt yours in only a few years.” The huge growth of companies like Uber and Airbnb prove that a combination of effective, strategic business processes and a smart idea can disrupt long-established industries.

It’s not just technology that’s disrupting businesses – the potential impact of political, economic and environmental changes are also cause for concern. Whether it’s political uncertainty in the form of Brexit or new government leadership in economic powerhouse countries like France, Britain and America, the political (and by extension, the economic) global business landscape seems more uncertain than ever.

Climate change is also having an impact on business processes. Supply chain logistics and goods manufacturing processes, especially those that involve raw materials, as well as transport and packaging, have all come under stress due to adverse weather conditions.

3 Predictions For 2017: Everything is Becoming Digital. Research report from Bersin by Deloitte
The cost of climate change

Assessing the future impact of climate change is still new territory for scientists and economists. New research paints a potentially costly picture of the future: one study concludes that coastal flooding could cause around $1 trillion\(^1\) worth of damage annually by 2050 if pre-emptive measures are not put in place. Recent environmental disasters help paint a picture of the potential cost to big business – one of the greatest climate change natural disasters in recent years, Hurricane Katrina, killed over 1,800 people and caused over $108 billion worth of property damage in the Gulf Coast of America. Hurricane Sandy, which battered New York City’s population just seven years later, caused $20 billion damage and the city is now taking steps to prevent further climate-related costs.

Most of us enjoy our steaming hot cups of coffee without really thinking about the many steps a business has taken to bring us that brew. Around 120 million people worldwide rely on the coffee supply chain for their living but climate change is having an effect on that. Hugo Villela, regional agri-business specialist at Oikocredit, says the pressure is on coffee farmers to have faster and more efficient processes in place (such as “better stock control, improved price risk management incorporating more varied financing options, tighter controls over their business commitments, and to adopt more long-term, diversified approaches to their small-holdings”) to cope. The message is clear: companies need to ensure that they compete in today’s fast-changing landscape while still accounting for imminent and often unforeseen changes. To be ready, efficient business processes need to be adopted company-wide.

---

\(^1\) All figures here are in US dollars.
Client success story
The ‘power’ of change management and regulatory training

A large power supplier in the highly-regulated energy sector needed to condense their existing 2.5 hour-long face-to-face training programme on change management and mandatory processes for their nuclear licence into shorter elearning.

Our organisation produced a 40-minute elearning course that sits on their existing LMS which contains an engaging mix of interactions and media such as photography, diagrams and audio. Their course was designed in gomo to be mobile-friendly so learners could access the content on the device of their choice.

@leolearning
Finding the right balance between customer and product

With so much technical innovation, new and varied technologies and cheaper product offerings, customers are more spoilt for choice than ever before. In order to stay useful and relevant in this ultra-competitive marketplace, companies’ learning programmes should keep business processes top of mind and customer-centric. As John Hagel, director of Deloitte LLP’s Center for the Edge in Deloitte states, “Today, the key to organisational success is not ‘scalable efficiency’, but ‘scalable learning’. You, as an organisation, must be able to experiment, put prototype products in front of customers, rapidly learn from your competitors, and stay ahead of your marketplace, industry, and technology trends. This means your whole organisation has to focus on customer-centric learning, experimentation, and time to market.”

Future learning innovations also need to be about the product, which is at the heart of what organisations do. Product-focused business processes are not just about the end-product; organisations are increasingly looking at the entire supply chain and sustainability. Many business processes, like product knowledge training, compliance, health and safety, sales process training, business processes and technical process training, can be overly-complex and dry subjects in the wrong hands.

The solution? To create meaningful and engaging product knowledge training that is localised and translated for a disparate audience.

@leolearning
LEO worked with a high street retailer to develop a game linked to an induction portal that could be used for both attraction and onboarding. The game, accessible publically from app stores, allowed players to run the store for the day. When played as an attraction tool, players could use a guest login, and if they handled the challenges successfully, they were routed to the appropriate regional careers site at the end of the game and encouraged to apply.

When deployed as an onboarding tool, the successful player/learner had the potential to make the leaderboard and gain visibility as a potential future leader from the beginning. If they performed poorly, the game’s built-in diagnostics routed them to personalised learning resources on the portal that would aim to resolve their individual development needs.
Most organisations now employ Millennials and it’s estimated that by 2020, a significant portion of the global workforce will be made up of people with the Millennial mindset. Millennials tend to hold more jobs in their lifetimes than previous generations which means that every time they move companies, they take essential skills and knowledge of business processes with them, making it harder for HR and L&D teams to replace that lost knowledge.

They’re not your typical learners and expect learning to be delivered to them in a different way – because Millennials have grown up surrounded by technology within easy reach and near-constant access to the Internet, they’re very digitally-focused and feel comfortable going online to find relevant resources.

Learning programmes need to be tailored to meet the Millennial mindset and this is best achieved using microlearning content (shorter, more focussed segments of elearning). The modern learner prefers a BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) approach to elearning, where they take courses at their leisure on the device of their choosing. This usually means a smartphone or tablet, and learning content should therefore be optimised to fully embrace mobile learning.

This tech-driven generation are digitally resourceful and will regularly turn to the Internet for answers. Companies need to have their business processes and any related learning materials within easy reach, plus continually update their learning materials so that staff can access just-in-time resources for their business. For this reason, it’s essential that organisations control the learning paths to ensure that business processes are followed, while still allowing for room for innovation, which is a necessary balance for Millennial learners.

---

The Millennial mindset

---

Client success story

Using mobile learning to tackle bullying, harassment and discrimination

A government agency with a mandate to observe and challenge unwanted behaviours needed a learning solution to help managers understand and recognise bullying, harassment and discrimination (BHD) and how to deal with it. The course, built in gomo to be accessible on desktop, smartphone and tablet devices, comprises five short modules, which contain realistic case studies and scenarios, multiple choice questions, a round-up of key learning points and links to further resources.

For more on how to strike the right balance between providing training programmes that ensure Millennials follow business processes whilst still delivering learning that is tailored to meet their tech-savvy, always-on needs, download a copy of LEO’s free ebook, The Millennial Challenge: Can We Make Them Stay?
Refining business processes through elearning

Processes touch every aspect of the business, with a vast array of communications tools to support and communicate these to teams. The potential pitfall though, is that if learners are left to figure things out on their own, there’s going to be a growing margin for error.

“Organisations are now facing change at an accelerated rate as digital becomes a crucial ingredient for growth,” says a report by Deloitte.

“As a result, companies face a radically changing environment for the workforce, the workplace and the world of work. These shifts are changing almost every aspect of how organisations lead, support and develop their people.”

Surveys into future-proofing show that businesses are aware of the pressing and urgent need to begin adapting their processes, but most don’t feel ready for what will come. One study, for example, found that only 56% of UK organisations report starting to either design or execute their plans to build what their organisation will look like in the future. Even worse, only 33% of those surveyed feel ready to tackle this complex process. Taking a global view, another study of over 7,000 organisations in 130 countries concluded that 92% of companies believe that their current business processes are not aligned towards success in the future.

The great innovations of the 21st century have brought massive technological change, which in turn, has led to multiple new ways of doing business and engaging with customers. This trend is certain to continue. Coping with the ever-increasing rate of change in the global workplace means more than just devising a lofty vision for the future – organisations need to radically transform the way they work in order to grow, learn and adapt. With all this change, it’s easy to fall behind, which is why a constant climate of learning is needed for a wide variety of business needs and processes.

Business processes are vital to ensure consistency and compliance, as well as protect IP and innovation in the organisation. Learning programmes around processes in our current business climate need to strike the balance between ensuring mandatory learning, consistency and compliance, while still leaving room for capturing the kind of innovation that will allow a business to evolve and grow.

---

1 Global Human Capital Trends 2017: Rewriting the rules for the digital age
At LEO, we understand how to build engaging training programmes that optimise any organisation’s business processes. To speak to a LEO consultant about how our bespoke elearning solutions can help your company, get in touch with us today.